583 431 [412] on the husband's wealth). Theoretically, the knife should be an efamba. In practice it is sometimes possible to substitute an empúte in an attractive wooden sheath amply adorned with "copper-plated nails." At other times the knife and spears may be replaced by their corresponding value in bakonga. This is considered the most important ● [675] boóngo, and therefore no one gives up his claim to it. If the son-in-law cannot present it to his father-in-law immediately, he promises to do so later, and his father-in-law does not fail to make use of any opportunity to remind him of his promise. Some men insist on a wéko as pledge. Others are satisfied with a piece of loasi or a bosóngó (splinter or part of the trunk of a palm tree), which the husband gives to the ndonga as a token of acknowledgement of his debt and as evidence of his willingness to pay it as soon as he has the means. Some men, however, insist so strongly on the boóngo that they will not accept the walo [146] before they have received it. Thus, one day recently, Lomanga d'Ifusó (Bongíli) refused to accept the walo for his daughter Ekofo, engaged to Bokungá w'akáyá (of Bongíli, Ndongó). He insisted that the father of the latter, Bokungá w'is'ćy'-Ingilá first go back to get his boóngo. Since he was unable to find five spears, he substituted for them a second knife and a copper ring; these were accepted by old Lomanga. Shortly thereafter the same thing happened to Bokungá of Bontole (Bongíli), who wanted to pay the walo for his fiancée Ngelé of Bofimbo (Bombwanja), the sister of Bongondé, clerk of the Bombwanja. The woman's family refused to take the bride price before receiving the ifaká l'akongá b'is'ćy'óna boóngo.

2) Byíkó bya nyang'ćy'óna, "porcupines for the mother." [251] This present consists of two or three fresh or smoked porcupine. Bétomba, baatá birds, or bekósa fish may be substituted for them. The substitution of hens is not well regarded, because they are within the realm of the nkomí. If someone does not have the means to satisfy this requirement, he gives the mother two copper rings saying mfiká bakonga bífé yóombe byíkó biké, "here are two copper rings; go and buy yourself some porcupines." Fabrics are sometimes substituted nowadays.

426 Another expression used is forna losika, fomela N. losika,
515 "to strike a losaka," that is, a clapping of the hands. The idea involved is the same as above: a man who sees no way out of his difficulties is represented as clapping his hands to attract the attention of someone who can help him. His action is a call for help. Therefore the term losika is sometimes used to designate the woman, through the same type of analogy that leads to the use of the word bodongá.

Although the husband has full conjugal rights over the bodongá and her activities, she is not strictly speaking his wife. It may simply be said that she belongs to him, and the fact that she belongs to him gives him the rights of a so-called husband. He has no obligations toward her, as he would have in an ordinary marriage. Thus in the example given above, if the woman dies while living with Ekamba, her father has no claim, even if no bride-price payment has been made; because he gave his daughter to Ekamba on his own initiative. If the bodongá runs away from her owner he is entitled to a normal reimbursement of the valuables lent by him and to an additional 10 to 20 rings (or more, in proportion to the size of the loan) as damages for his loss. This supplement is due him even if he has paid a bride price to the woman's father for a legitimate marriage.

For if he loves this woman there is no reason why he cannot marry her properly. He will be especially willing to do so because as long as she remains simply a security, she is viewed with contempt and mocked by her fellows. They say, "You are not a wife, you are only a bodongá; there is no difference between you and a slave, for your husband has not paid a bride price for you."

Once the bride price is paid the bodongá becomes a real wife, and all the rules of law are applicable to this [212] union, which from then on is a normal marriage in every way comparable to a marriage by nkumbá. As to the loan, it is then included in the total amount of the bride price.

926 The pawning of a woman is also carried out through the media-
515 tion of a ndonga who, however, bears a special name, ndonga ká
●675 mɔlikɔnda, which is literally translated as "witness of I have not asked you." He is thus contrasted with a ndonga in the usual sense for the

following reason: a true ndonga is designated by the husband while, in this instance, on the contrary, the intervention is requested by the girl's father. Consequently, a man who takes a boɗngɨ as security against a loan is not obliged to recognize him as a proper official witness. This witness is not a ndonga of a marriage, but he must bear witness to the security agreement.

When a woman given as boɗngɨ ran away from her owner, the latter attacked the ndonga and, if he found an opportunity, made him prisoner. If the matter were not settled, he could reduce the ndonga to slavery. But if he did so, he had to expect vengeance on part of the ndonga's family, although, according to the usual and legitimate norm, their vengeance should rather be directed against the man who asked for their relative's intervention. For it is he who is responsible for everything and who rightly should bear all the consequences. The exception, which sometimes really occurred, was due to the idea that "might is right" which, here as in "civilized" countries, is often true. (1)

1. This situation is not the only one in which a ndonga ɛ̂a ntsikoofida participates. The intervention of such a person may also be required under other circumstances. For example, Esalɛ of Bonkoso was taken prisoner by Isia of Bongíli. Mpetsí was related to Esalɛ and bound by friendship to Isia. He begged the latter to give Esalɛ back his freedom and guaranteed the payment of the ransom; he thus became a ndonga ɛ̂a ntsikoofind. If the payment is delayed too long, Isia will take vengeance upon Mpetsí and even has the right to abduct his wife as compensation.

When a man who has received a boɗngɨ wants to marry her properly he designates his own ndonga, who must fulfill [213] all the conditions required. Thus the ndonga who participates in the pawning is not the ndonga of the marriage. However, since the former has

426 589x 675 participated in handing over the boɔngɛ, he is usually allowed the honor of being a supplementary witness to the chief ndonga.

Everything that has been said shows clearly that the offer of a boɔngɛ may in no way be considered a marriage, even though it has some of the external characteristics of a marital union.

A very similar practice but one which now belongs to the past is that of offering a woman in begging for peace (boɔndo). The following is an example from history: (1) At the time when the peoples

1. We are giving this story in detail because it is a living illustration of certain manifestations of Nkundɔ social life.

now living in this area were still settled near the sources of the Ikelemba, there was a war between the families of Mpumo, ancestor of the Boɛndɛ, and Lonyango, ancestor of the Bonkoso. The latter, defeated, called for help from the family of Bokungɛ, their bonankɛnɛ and one of the ancestors of the Bongili. Bokungɛ's family inflicted a stinging defeat on Mpumo.

Mpumo was frightened and begged for peace, offering Bokungɛ his sister Mbɛlaka. Bokungɛ accepted. But since he liked this woman, he wanted to contract a regular marriage with her. Therefore he paid a high bride price. But as Mbɛlaka was of a good family, she declared that she did not want to go to her husband alone and insisted that her father send an ebisa with her. (2) Her relative Wela of Ngombe

2. See Chapter VII, Article IV.

(Boimbo) was assigned to her. But the old father, wanting to show off his wealth, went even further and added a second ebisa, namely Eumɛ, daughter of Bokelɛ of Bokɛtola, his maternal uncle. Finally, to complete this already ample dowry, Mpumo gave his daughter several men who were Mpɛmɛ (dependents) "to work the bellows in Bokungɛ's iron foundry." [214] Among them, according to the story, were Bokuka, Likitɛ, Engota, Lofalanga, and others.

426 583[2] 675 Similarly, Mpumo received Lifomf, daughter of Ikɔ́lɛ́ as a boɔ́ndo. Her brother, Ndyɛ́ntikala, ancestor of the Mbɔ́ngá (Liɔ́ko, Ekonda), offered her to Mpumo in asking for peace. Mpumo married her in the regular manner. In his fight against the Ekonda this same Mpumo in the same manner obtained Boɔ́ngɔ́, the sister of Bangɔ́ndɔ́ of Mpɛ́njwá (Wɛ́yá).

Since the victor in war usually wanted to marry the woman in the proper fashion by paying a bride price, the handing over of a relative as boɔ́ndo may be compared to the practice common in Europe in the Middle Ages, when a prince would marry his daughter or sister off to a competitor or an adversary to seal the peace between them. In both cases, therefore, a kind of political marriage is involved.

Article VI. Exchange

583[x] 184 When they speak of the exchange of women (yenjá, from the verb enja, "to exchange" in general), the tribes under discussion do not all refer to the same thing. According to the situation, several types of exchange may be distinguished.

1) The pure Nkundɔ́ have a practice of exchanging daughters, sisters, relatives. This exchange is always carried out through the payment of bride price and the agency of a ndonga. Thus two regular marriages by nkumbɔ́ are involved, and the term "exchange" is only very inappropriately applied to them. The two men who give each other their sisters in marriage are each contracting an ordinary marriage according to the usual norms.

2) Sometimes the term "exchange" is applied to the practice of ikɛ́kelo, which is better explained through an example than by a long discussion. Suppose that Eale marries the woman Ámbá. Lokio, Eale's sister, [215] is married to Isia. Ámbá leaves her husband for one of Isia's relatives. At the first opportunity Eale detains his sister Lokio at his home, thus taking her from her husband, and since his wife Ámbá does not return to him, he hands his sister Lokio over to another man in marriage. Or suppose that Eale has married one of Isia's relatives, and Isia has married a relative of Eale. If one of the wives leaves her